

CAN THEY NOT TASTE BY THEMSELVES?

Reality vs. Appearances. Be Critical

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Intent of the Fable.

- ✓ *To encourage people to evaluate the worth of persons, things, and events by using their reason, perceptions, intuition and common sense.*
- ✓ *To shift the focus of our judgment from first impressions, hearsays, from adverts and fads and from public opinion to facts and objective evidence. .*
- ✓ *To counteract the craze people have for credentials, degrees, diplomas, titles and honors to impress others and to prop their poor self-esteem..*

THE FABLE.

Narrator: A certain foreign concern dealing in exports and imports requested a local merchant of India to forward to them samples of mangoes of different varieties and prices so that they might place a large order for those of their choice. In compliance with their request the merchant sent mangoes of five different varieties packed in five different boxes.

The varieties were:

- 1st Alphonso Mangoes
- 2nd Piers Mangoes
- 3rd Fernandez Mangoes
- 4th Algoma Mangoes
- 5th Langdon Mangoes

The merchant instructed his workmen to stick on each box, in a prominent and visible place the proper label indicating the variety and price of the mangoes packed in the boxes. Along with the boxes he sent a letter that read thus:

1..1. 2009

Dear Sirs,

In compliance with your request, I am forwarding by air parcel five boxes of 1 doz. Mangoes each. Each box contains mangoes of a different variety and price. After you have examined and tasted the mangoes, kindly place your order of those you like best. Please note that the boxes contain the following qualities and varieties of mangoes.

Box No. 1 Best quality Alphonso " Mangoes	Rs50/-each
Box No. 2 Second best Piers Mangoes	Rest 30/-each
Box No. 3 Good quality Fernandez Mangoes	Rest 20/ -each
Box No. 4 Cheap quality Algoma Mangoes	Rest 10/- each
Box No. 5 Cheapest Langdon Mangoes	Rest 5/- each

Waiting for your order and assuring you of our prompt and efficient service.
 Yours faithfully,
 X. X. X.

Unfortunately, the packers got all the labels mixed up... The boxes were dispatched with the wrong labels affixed to them... On arrival of the boxes, the importers opened them and examined their contents. The box with Langdon mangoes, those of the cheapest quality were labeled "Best Quality "Alphorns mangoes". Price Rs: 50/- each. The importers tasted the mangoes of the cheapest quality and exclaimed:

Importers: Delicious!... What sweetness!... These fruits are simply superb!... The price is high, Rs: 50/— but no matter. They are worth the price. After all they are of the best quality. Their price-tag is there to remind us of their exquisiteness...

Narrator: Next the importers tasted the Pires mangoes, second best quality, which had been marked with label No. 4 "Cheap quality". After tasting the mangoes their faces fell and with a sour grimace they said:

Importers: Oofl What a poor taste! They are not good at all! They don't stand comparison with the variety we sampled earlier. After their entire label reads cheap quality and their price is a paltry Rs. 10/ - each!

Narrator: When the box with the best mangoes, the Alphonso Mangoes, was opened the importers eyed them with a mixture of utter disappointment and contempt. They said

Importers: It's not even worth tasting them! If quality four was so poor, what will quality 5, be! They have got to be bad. After all, the label shows that they are the cheapest! How could they be good at the ridiculous price of five rupees each!

Narrator: And so without further ado, they unceremoniously threw the whole lot into the garbage can. When the crows that were watching from a distance saw the best mangoes thrown into the garbage can, they were both shocked and overjoyed!... Swiftly, they made a dash for the mangoes and feasted on them ! After they had eaten them away the crows remarked:

Crows: Men are really funny! To think that they would throw the best mangoes away and eat the worst!... Can they not taste the quality of the mangoes by themselves instead of going by labels?
 Aren't they capable of judging things on their own rather than trust in titles?...
 It's strange that men who pride themselves of being clever, should judge the value and quality of things by surface impressions not by their real worth?

We animals, being irrational, taste and see... We trust our experience... We rely on our perceptions. We need no labels and prices, to know which the good mangoes are

Thoughts for reflection

- We place too much premium on external trappings of power, authority, titles, degrees, honors, etc.
- A clever man is taken to be an "ignoramus" if he has no degree to boast after his name!
- Titles, money, possessions, degrees, honorific labels are "status symbols": Those who cannot earn them try to buy them!
- The worth of a person is within himself, in what he is, not in what he is thought to be or on what he pretends to be
- Labels, titles, degrees, etc. are props to bolster up our poor our self-image.
- We take shelter behind them to shield ourselves from criticism and rejection.
- The more insecure we are, the more we cling to labels and external props and trappings supporting us.
- We live in a world of make-believe. We are afraid of reality. Its appearances and showmanship that count, not facts and truth.
- The all-important thing is not to be but to appear good, honest, respectable and capable.
- We get a kind of cheap consolation out of people who make us feel good, honest, and respectable, though in reality really we are not.
- `Titles and honors are invested with a "ritualizing" function. By conferring titular status to persons, the reality of the person is replaced by a semblance of it.
- No soon a dishonest man or a 'nonentity' acquires a title than he is invested with respectability.
- Many a 'respectable' political leader today was once upon a time, a rogue, a terrorist and a common criminal.
- All of a sudden, when voted to power they become honorable, admired and respected all over the world!
- The same can be said about the "manufactured celebrities and artificially created shining stars' of the world of film, sports and pop. Some of them were nothing but prostitutes, bums and parasites.
- We have not to judge things and people by the yardsticks of the world: money, fame, popularity, pomp, status, commercial value, etc.
- The value of things like writings, works of art, institutions, etc, should lie in the things themselves, not in reference to the persons who created or originated them.
- We tend not to consider what their real worth is, but summarily accept what the world says they are.
- For most of us what is beautiful is not that which arouses our aesthetic sensibility, but that which advertising and the media made beautiful!...

- Before we venture an opinion in anything or on anyone, we want first to know what people think and feel about it. Then, only we give our impersonal and a non-reflected opinion.
- It looks as if our capacity and daring to judge on our own, and to stand by our perceptions and innate wisdom has been atrophied.
- We have abdicated our right to judge things and people according to our personal standards and values.
- We are afraid to think different, to feel different and speak different! We like to play safe being protected behind a faceless and anonymous crowd..
- We are scared to stand up by our values, our convictions and our perceptions...
- Animals trust their perceptions. They know what is good and what is bad for them: they know what tastes good and what tastes bad. We humans do not.
- We have become slaves to the prevailing tastes and fashions and lifestyles of our consumerist society.
- We have fallen prey to the open and hidden persuaders of our world: the ad-man, the movie star, the sales executive and the political demagogue.
- We have lost our mind, our judgment, our discretion... our soul! We have traded our uniqueness for a mess of potage!